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THE EVIDENCE OF SALVATION.

THE
EVIDENCE OF SALVATION
OR
THE DIRECT WITNESS OF
THE SPIRIT

BY
REV. EVERETT S. STACKPOLE, D.D.
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P R E F A C E.

THE subject matter of this book has earnestly engaged the writer's thought and study for a long time. His ideas thereon first found shape in a sermon published in 1878. During his stay in Italy as teacher in a Theological School, the importance of the subject for the training of native preachers and converts led to the publication of a tract entitled *La Diretta Testimonianza dello Spirito Santo*. Revival work in the home country has so clearly shown the need of a condensed manual on a subject of such vital importance to seekers and uncertain believers, that, at the request of the Boston Preachers' Meeting, before which a summary of the argument herein presented was read, its publication is now proposed.

The principal works to which the writer is indebted are mentioned in footnotes. To name

those that have been read during twenty years to little profit, or to positive harm, would fill many pages. The tendency of the times seems to be to substitute some other ground of assurance for that which alone can satisfy the heart. That souls through knowledge of the truth may be saved from presumption, credulity, despondency, unsatisfied longing, despair, and unbelief is the writer's aim and prayer.

I.

THE QUESTION STATED.

THE EVIDENCE OF SALVATION ; OR, THE DIRECT WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

I.

THE QUESTION STATED.

CERTAINTY is always the goal of the mind's endeavor ; to reach it the unwearied struggle of every earnest soul. The human mind is so constituted that it can never be at rest while in doubt. The desire to become certain of the truth of any proposition is the more ardent in proportion as the alleged truth affects one's personal welfare. Where immense consequences hinge upon the answering of a question in the affirmative or negative, we are very careful what reply we give. Now, no question can be more momentous than this, Am I saved

from sin? A probable affirmative is not satisfying. The issue at stake is too vast to allow any possibility of error. So long as there is even the lowest degree of possibility that one may be mistaken in the answer to that question, he cannot be contented. Alarm, begotten by the magnitude of the issue, outweighs the force of gigantic evidence, and extreme probability still leaves him in harassing doubt. Opinions, beliefs, reasonings, authority of men, all fail to calm the fears of conscience and assure the sinner of salvation. Only the full assurance of faith, of hope, and of understanding¹ can remove every doubt and fear, and give perfect peace to the penitent sinner.

And the lack of certainty becomes all the more annoying if the soul feels that further evidence may be attained for the settlement of the question. In the absence of such conviction, the person will partially succeed in reconciling himself to this state of uncertainty, and, under the plea of trusting God, try to make a virtue of necessity. Yet even then, though he

¹ Heb. x. 21; vi. 11; Col. ii. 12.

may hold that certainty relative to this matter cannot be attained in this life, his instinctive desire often gets the better of his reason, and he is heard exclaiming, —

“ ’Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it gives me anxious thought, —
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I His, or am I not?’ ”

But a fully awakened soul, who believes that he may be made as certain of his salvation and divine sonship as of any other matter of knowledge whatever, will never rest short of that certainty. He will continue to seek for light till every shadow of doubt has been blown away by the breath of the Spirit.

Nor is this unrest of soul to be condemned as evidence of unbelief. Unbelief does not search after God, but hides away from Him. This yearning of the soul after a knowledge of God and divine things is rather evidence of a deeper consecration and a broader faith. Faith of itself can give no satisfaction. The object of faith’s longing aspiration is always knowledge. We believe in order that we may know.

Unless knowledge succeeds to faith, we are nothing profited. Indeed, a consequent knowledge is the only sure test of the genuineness of the preceding faith. Though Abraham believed God, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, he immediately asked, “Whereby shall I know?”¹ and God gave him two immutable signs. The very longing for spiritual knowledge is awakened and intensified by the Holy Spirit, and hence is a glad prophecy of its own fulfilment; for He who is the inspirer of prayer will surely be the answerer. It is not unbelief that occasions unrest in such cases. It is, rather, uncertainty of one’s spiritual relation to God, and lack of a personal acquaintance with Christ as Saviour. The cause of the unrest and uncertainty is sometimes theological perplexities and erroneous instruction received.

And we observe that the class of Christians who are dissatisfied with their present religious experience, who are often uncertain of their relation to God, who are from time to time pos-

¹ Gen. xv. 8; Heb. vi. 17, 18.

sessed of a restless longing after a consciousness of their spiritual adoption, is by no means small. Those who constantly live in the sunlight of full assurance form the minority of professed Christians. We have noticed that in accounts of religious revivals two classes of converts are mentioned. One writer describes a recent revival thus: "There has been of late an unusual religious interest in our church. Its members have been newly aroused to a sense of their responsibilities as well as privileges, and as the result of their earnest co-operation with the pastor we trust several have been hopefully converted to God." Another writer thus describes a similar event: "During the past few weeks there has been a gracious outpouring of the divine Spirit in —. Under the zealous and efficient labors of evangelist B —, souls have been saved every night. Scores have been soundly converted to God. The good work is still advancing." Here we have the *hopefully* converted and the *soundly* converted. We must make due allowance for the difference of mental and spiritual peculiari-

ties of the writers. It is quite possible that the first revival was quite as powerful and permanent in its results as the second. Still, the phrases hint at a real difference in the experience of converts. The latter *know* that they are saved; the former *hope* so. Perhaps it is a "comfortable hope." In some cases it is not so comforting, being mixed with so much of doubt and uncertainty. It is a hope born of desire rather than of conviction,—a natural hope rather than one supernaturally inspired,—"a desire of good with a belief that it is attainable," rather than a desire of good with the assurance that a foretaste of it has already been attained. It is not an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.

We say the class called soundly converted know that they are saved. The word *know* is here used in its deepest significance, and not in the loose manner of popular speech. To know is to be certain of anything. Such certainty is not an opinion, not an inference, not belief, however well grounded, not a conclusion reached by multiplied evidences; but it results

from the testimony of one's own consciousness witnessing to a fact there made known.

The question, then, is before us, How may one know that one is saved? Let us endeavor to answer that question, examining the various evidences on which professed Christians are leaning.

THE REPLY OF ROMANISM.

The Council of Trent decreed that "no one can know with the certitude of faith, beyond the possibility of error, that he has attained the grace of God." In denying the direct testimony of the Spirit in the heart of the believer the Roman Catholic Church is certainly self-consistent. If it were the privilege of every true penitent to be assured of his pardon by the voice of God in his soul, then the absolution of the confessor would be perfectly useless. To preserve the authority of the priesthood this Church has denied the promises of God. No man, in whatsoever office, can pardon sin. They admit this, but assert that God has made the priest, as confessor, the agent by whom the

divine pardon is announced to the penitent. Nevertheless, the priest says, "*Ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis*" (I absolve thee from thy sins); and the penitent leaves the confessional, quieting his conscience with the words of the priest. In many cases his only reason for supposing he is forgiven is that the priest says so. If the penitent be well informed in the doctrine of his own church, he knows that the absolution of the priest is of no use unless there be genuine contrition, or at least attrition, in his own heart, together with a purpose to abandon all sin. He knows, too, that the validity of the absolution depends on the intention of the priest, and also that the priest has no authority to absolve unless he has received it by uninterrupted apostolic succession from St. Peter. The better informed the penitent is the less assured he must feel in his heart of the divine forgiveness. The confessor knows neither the mind of God nor of the penitent. How, then, can he declare the remission of sins? He sometimes adds to the formula given above, *in quantum possum* (in so far as I am able); since certain sins must

be confessed to higher ecclesiastical authorities before complete absolution can be granted. Moreover, by full absolution only the eternal penalties of sin are remitted, while the temporal penalties must still be paid by the penitent, either in penances and purchase of indulgences or in the pains of purgatory. How different is all this from the full, complete, and unmerited pardon graciously bestowed upon whosoever offers the prayer of faith in Jesus' name!

How many have sought to stifle the voice of conscience and to believe that which the heart and reason deny! How many, recognizing the uselessness of such a confession and absolution, go to the confessional only once a year or stay away altogether! How many have honestly confessed to the priest, and have gone away with a burden still upon the conscience and with no joyous certainty of forgiveness in the heart! We recall the testimony of a converted priest, who declared that he had been to the confessional hundreds of times and never felt sure of divine pardon, but the first time he heartily confessed directly to Jesus,

our great High Priest, he felt so fully assured of the forgiveness of all his sins that he never went to the earthly confessor again.

The folly of those in the Protestant Church who try by sophistical reasoning or dogmatic assertions to persuade seekers to believe that they are saved, is parallel to that of the Roman Catholic Church. No man has any authority or precise knowledge in the case. The preacher can only declare the general principles of salvation, the infallible conditions of forgiveness, and leave the seeker to deal directly with Christ, through whose intercession alone we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father. How many so-called converts have been led by false persuasions to doubtingly believe for a time that they are saved, only to awaken at last to the truth that they have been deceived ! Accept no absolution that does not come directly from God to the soul.

II.

WITNESS OF CONSCIENCE.

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ONE of the evidences of salvation often presented to seekers is put in the form of a question, "Don't you feel better?" The church and pastor may press around an uncertain or despondent penitent with this inquiry. Well, of course he feels better in some sense. In another sense he feels worse, being burdened with anxiety and longing. His conscience has always told him that he ought to be a Christian, that he ought to consecrate himself to the service of God, and now that he is honestly endeavoring to do his duty, it cannot be otherwise than that he feels approval taking the place of disapproval. This is evidence that he is going in the right direction, but is not satisfactory proof that he has reached the goal. Every conscientious act done by any one, whether Christian or

not, receives its reward. It is a movement in the right direction, and if earnestly continued will eventually lead to God. It is Holland who says,—

“I hold this thing to be grandly true,
That a noble deed is a step towards God,
Lifting the soul from the common sod
To a higher air and a purer view.”

Every good thought, word, or deed is a movement heavenward; and the observance of the law of conscience, if persisted in, will prove what the Mosaic law was to the Jews, a “schoolmaster to lead to Christ.” The more closely one endeavors to fulfil the moral law, the more he will discover his weakness and inability; and this will lead him to seek help beyond and above himself. Only let the morality be thorough, and not superficial, extending to inward thought as well as to outward act. Such a moralist will be found inquiring of the Master, “What good thing must I do in order to inherit eternal life?” Contenting one’s self with doing *about* right is

the dangerous thing. So many seem to be satisfied with being *pretty* good.

The fact, then, that one in some respects feels better because he does what he knows to be his duty, and commences seeking the Lord, is no evidence that he has found Him. A large number of seekers stop here. They are encouraged to think that this modified approval of conscience is proof of their conversion. They pray, read the Bible, go to church, talk in meeting perhaps, and make many good resolves, trusting, almost without knowing it, to their own ability to keep them. They bring forth some fruit meet for repentance, soon get tired of the unequal contest with their spiritual foes, realize unrest instead of peace, get discouraged, and so, it is said, "backslide" within a few weeks or months. No! they do not backslide; they were never converted. They have all the time been under the law and not under grace. Some keep on with the outward formalities of godliness, knowing nothing of the power thereof. A few of this class, in whom the power of will and

conscience is great, continue for some time, answering pretty nearly to a low type of Old Testament saint, living by the deeds of the law with a remembrance of sins made every year continually, until they get new light, and hence make a new departure and get into the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, or a reaction sets in, and they become hardened, bitter sceptics and disbelievers in experimental religion. They think they have weighed Christianity in the balances and found it wanting. The difficulty is that they have never properly put it to the test. There has not been a complete surrender to God, and a hearty acceptance of Christ as Prince and Saviour.

WITNESS OF FRATERNAL LOVE.

Another ground of assurance frequently brought to the attention of the uncertain seeker of salvation is the argument of St. John, "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." This may be a comforting assurance to such as have once hated the people of God, and felt no ad-

miration for a life that is holy and just and good ; but any one who has been accustomed to reverence his conscience, and recognize moral goodness, feels no opposition in his heart to Christians as such. He loves some of the brethren, and some he does not admire particularly. A goodly company of upright but unconverted men and women are frequenting our churches, and would that there were more of them ! They have kept all the commandments from youth up, thanks to the general influence of Christianity. They admire goodness wherever revealed. They in some degree love the genuine followers of Christ. Wherever they see an honorable, upright, conscientious, generous-hearted, noble man, they feel attracted toward him, whether he be a professed Christian or not. Such admiration and love are only intensified by conversion. In these cases there is no such radical change in their affections as indicates the beginning of a new life. Whenever, on the other hand, they see a narrow-minded, stingy, bigoted, selfish man (and the Church holds such in her membership, and we dare not

say they are not babes in Christ), they cordially dislike him, whether he be a professed Christian or not. Conversion only intensifies this feeling also, though with the dislike should be mingled pity and a desire to make the disagreeable one better. Then, too, identification of interests will always create a bond of fellowship more or less strong. It is perfectly natural that, having cast in one's lot with the Church, having identified one's self publicly with it, one should feel some measure of brotherly love, or at least regard, which may be mistaken for Christian love. So one regards complacently members of his lodge or club.

There are degrees of love. How much must one "love the brethren" in order to know thereby that he is a child of God? Let us look a little deeper into this assurance upon which so many feeble Christians are leaning as almost their sole prop. What did the apostle mean by it? To "love the brethren" in his day was to associate with them, and share with them the ignominy and persecution of the world. More, it was to hazard one's life for

the brethren and sometimes actually to lose it. John goes on to give two tests of this fraternal love.¹ (1) As Christ laid down His life out of love to us, so we ought to lay down our lives out of love to them. (2) Fraternal love should prompt us to consider the needs of our brother, and freely and generously assist him, not by giving him a miserable pittance that will barely keep him out of the poorhouse, but by sharing with him as we would that he should do unto us in reversed circumstances.

Now say, my Christian friend, you that are relying on this text as the chief assurance of your salvation, who bolster up your weak faith by frequently repeating it, do you love the brethren well enough to generously relieve their needs? Can you suffer shame and persecution with them? Could you die for one of them if love demanded it? If so, the gracious Lord will grant you exceeding comfort from this assurance. You will have no need or inclination to examine the evidences of your conversion. Yet ordinarily this evidence alone

¹ 1 John iii. 16, 17.

is not sufficient to allay all doubts and fears. It must be accompanied by some other and better assurance. It is far better to follow John on through this chapter, as he ascends by successive steps in the argument, till he arrives at the climax of assurance, “And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

III.

THE INDIRECT WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

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THE INDIRECT WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

IF a conscious possession of the fruit of the Spirit be relied on as an evidence of present salvation, this will often be found to be defective and unsatisfactory. Let us turn to Paul's list¹ of such fruit, and test ourselves thereby.

The fruit of the Spirit is love. Do I love God? Few persons will admit that they do not. It frequently happens that the less devoted one is, the more readily he will reply in the affirmative. But the trembling soul thinks of God's unutterable love to him, and hesitates to give his own feelings such a name. He sings,

“ My love so faint, so cold to Thee,
And Thine to me so great.”

Besides, love, as an emotion, cannot always be recognized in the consciousness; and when one

¹ Gal. v. 22, 23.

searches his heart to find love there, he seems to search in vain. "I ought to love God with all my heart," he says; "I am afraid that I do not. Besides, I cannot love an unknown being. I think I should love Him if I only knew Him personally. Would that God would reveal Himself to me!" And if he concludes that he loves God in any degree, is he conscious of God's love shed abroad in the heart? It is not enough to believe that he is loved. He wants to realize this truth in his soul. This test does not give full assurance.

The fruit of the Spirit is joy. "Ah me!" says the desponding soul, "how little joy I feel! A faint ripple of spiritual gladness at long intervals! It never swells to the high tide of bliss that joy in the Holy Spirit, joy unspeakable and full of glory, should give. And often my spiritual condition is the very reverse of joy. This test does not dispel my doubts."

Isaiah prophesies that "with joy ye shall draw water out of the wells of salvation;" and Christ says, "Ask and ye shall receive,

that your joy may be full." Such joy no man taketh from you. It may coexist with sorrow and pain. It is oftener calm than ecstatic. Its manifestation depends largely upon natural disposition, circumstances, and state of the body; yet it is the privilege of the Christian believer always to have it deep down in his soul. Such joy is his strength. And yet how many believers or half-believers feel and manifest no joy in the Lord. Their faces and testimonies are gloomy, or they are silent partners in the church. This results in part from a studied depreciation of religious feeling or emotion as an evidence of salvation and source of usefulness. We are repeatedly cautioned to pay no attention to feeling, and to walk by faith. Such instruction may be useful at times; nevertheless, the genuine believer will be joyful in God, and it is of the utmost importance that he should be.

The fruit of the Spirit is peace. "Well, I have a measure of peace sometimes. My conscience condemns me only now and then. Mine is a passive rather than an active peace.

It is not the peace that floweth like a river, and that passeth understanding. No ! mine is quite understandable. It is more difficult to understand why I do not have greater and more constant peace, such as I hear other Christians speak of. And then how often I feel all stirred up, irritated, provoked, discontented, and unrestful. I cannot say there is therefore no condemnation.” So this test fails also.

The fruit of the Spirit is long-suffering and gentleness. “How little patience I have ! How hard it is to wait ! How difficult to keep silent under provocation and prevent the uprising of angry impulse ! How many occasions I have to regret hasty words and tempers ! And if the manifestation of impatience be repressed, I am painfully conscious that it exists in my soul. Surely I have little fruit of the Spirit in this regard.”

And so if we go on to consider the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in “goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance,” the soul seeking assurance is led to deplore its lack of

these rather than to rest satisfied with them. It bemoans its little goodness, its lack of faith, its harshness of temper and expression, its many imperfections, its "crooked paths," its "leaving undone the things it ought to have done," etc. Then, too, these are the "fruit," not the fruits, of the Spirit. They are undivided. One cannot assure himself that he is a Christian if he has one or more of these good qualities and not the whole. He may be gentle, patient, and kind by nature, and yet be very selfish. Sentimentality may usurp the place of love, and lead to no self-sacrifice. Indifference and religious stupidity may be dignified by the name of peace. Presumption and credulity readily pass under the guise of faith. Patience is with some only insensibility or studied policy. Moreover, Wesley says, and there is abundance of experience to confirm the statement, that a degree of all the fruit of the Spirit may be experienced by the prevenient grace of God long before conversion. What degree, then, must a soul reach in order to rest assured of its salvation? Wesley an-

swers, "Let no one rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness. It is at the peril of our souls if we do."¹ At most, only a degree of probability can be reached on such evidence, but never a certainty.

¹ Sermons, vol. i. p. 100.

IV.

WITNESS OF THE WORD.

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WITNESS OF THE WORD.

MUCH account is made of this by recent evangelists, yet it is the most slippery foundation on which one can stand. It is usually put in the form of a syllogism. The major premise is this: God has promised salvation on certain conditions. The minor premise is: I have complied with those conditions. The conclusion logically follows: Therefore I am saved. The fallacy is in the minor premise. Who is to say when the conditions have been fulfilled. The human heart is above all things deceitful, always prejudiced in its own favor. How are we to tell whether our so-called repentance and faith are of a character acceptable to God. There is a repentance that needeth itself to be repented of, and our supposed faith may be only presumption. It is self-evident that He alone who has established the conditions is

competent to decide when they have been met ; and his decision we can never know unless He declare it unto us. The general principles of salvation may be found in the written Word, but my salvation or yours is nowhere revealed in the Bible. The Word gives no testimony whatever with reference to that event. If I ever learn that for a certainty, it must be by special revelation to me. The canon of revelation is not completed for me till God has expressly signified to my soul that I am His child. The uncertain seeker of salvation is not to be accused of the terrible sin of doubting God's word. He firmly believes the conditional promise ; he is in doubt as to whether he has met the condition, and no one but God can decide that question.

Many poor souls are misled at this point by unwise advisers. They are pressed to give their assent to this and that proposition, and then they are argued into the belief that they are saved. " You do come to Jesus, don't you ? " — " Yes. "

" And He has promised to receive all who come. " — " Yes. "

“Then you are saved. Praise the Lord.”

Or the argument runs thus: “You do put yourself upon the altar.” — “Yes.”

“And the Scripture says that the altar sanctifieth the gift. Do you believe that?”
“Yes.”

“Then you are sanctified.”

“But I don’t feel any evidence of it.”

“Is not God’s word evidence enough? Beware lest you commit the damning sin of unbelief. Believe that you are saved and you are.”

Thus Christianity is belied and belittled. Infidels have a right to sneer at this process. Its fallacy is evident to unprejudiced minds. The seeker is made his own judge, and justifies himself. Belief or intellectual assent to a proposition is substituted for confidence in a personal Saviour, expressed by utter abandonment to Him. It matters not that peace, joy, or shouting, should follow such a mental feat. The belief of an agreeable falsehood will produce happiness. It is doubtless true also that God in infinite mercy saves many sincere but ill-advised seekers, not in consequence of their syllogistic

belief, but in spite of it. To be sure, it is far easier for the evangelist to thus sophistically argue a seeker into the kingdom of heaven, than to persuade him to enter through self-crucifixion and abandonment to Christ.

Moreover, if there were no fault in either of the premises of the above syllogism, the conclusion would rest only on the same grounds as the major premise. No more can be drawn out in the conclusion than has been put into the premise. A syllogism does not add anything to the force of evidence. Thus the conclusion that the seeker is saved rests upon the various evidences of Christianity, by means of which the truth of a special divine revelation is proved. The conscientious believer who is inclined to examine the foundations of his faith, in order to reply to him who asks a reason for the hope that is in him, if he has been taught to prove his salvation in the syllogistic manner above indicated, is always propping up his faith with the historical, speculative, and probable evidences of Christianity, omitting that proof that has immeasurably more weight than all the rest com-

bined ; viz., the experimental.¹ It matters not what proofs may be urged in favor of any alleged truth, if it fail when it is put to the crucial test of experiment, it must be abandoned. If there be not a positive and satisfactory experience to be arrived at by compliance with certain biblical conditions, then Christianity has no stable basis. It is the experience of the Church, and not her argumentative theology, that has given her life and power. The Christian religion is not a system of blind belief. It is not built upon faith *alone*. It is a square, business-like arrangement between God and the human soul. He says, in substance, comply with certain conditions and you shall experience certain results ; and know that you have met the conditions because the results are experienced, but

¹ See the able work of Prof. L. F. Stearns on the Evidence of Christian Experience, p. 311. "It seems to me that the place of supreme importance among the evidences of Christianity must be conceded to the evidence of Christian experience. It is the vital member of the organism of proofs, in which the life of the whole is concentrated as in no other. It is, to change the figure, the keystone of the arch of evidences. We can conceive of the other evidences as to be dispensed with under certain circumstances; but this is absolutely indispensable."

do not conclude that the results are reached because you fancy you have met the conditions.

Suppose some physical law were announced on the authority of an eminent scientist. He declares that the law is based upon certain experiments, and that whoever will perform those experiments shall realize such and such results. What would be thought of a person who, after having performed a delicate course of experiments without witnessing any special result, should publish his confirmation of the law announced? Would such confirmation have any force of evidence? Would he show his faith in the scientist by believing that the result had occurred without any other reason for his belief except that the scientist had so promised? No, this would be mere credulity. He would rather show his confidence in the scientist by carefully and repeatedly performing the experiment, watching all the while with breathless interest to see the predicted results. So one shows his faith in God, not by believing he is saved after he thinks he has met the conditions, but by repetition of experiment, by importunate prayer,

seeking earnestly the fulfilment of the promise. The Scriptures and reason nowhere require one to *believe* that he is saved. That is not a matter of belief at all, but of conscious realization. Facts are not believed. We may believe a statement with regard to a fact, but the fact itself is not believed, but experienced.

Bishop Taylor well illustrates this point. A sick man, full of aches and pains, goes to a physician and states his infirmity. The physician unrolls his diplomas, signed by several medical faculties, and shows credentials and testimonials from reliable persons. "There," he says, "do you believe these statements, and have you confidence in my ability and willingness to heal you now?"

The patient assents.

"Then you are cured."

"But," says the sick man, "I don't feel any better."

"Never mind that," the doctor replies; "it is not a matter of feeling at all. It is wholly a matter of faith."

Just so say those who urge the seeker to

believe that he is saved. "You have salvation in the promise," they say. This is true of every sinner. The problem is to take salvation out of the promise, and to put it into the heart of the penitent seeker in conscious experience. It is quite important to distinguish between the promise and the fulfilment of the same.

V.

THE WITNESS OF FAITH.

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THE WITNESS OF FAITH.

THE same subtle error has been recently advocated by distinguishing the "witness of faith" from the "witness of the Spirit." The former is declared to be the "*conscious reception* of salvation," and the latter the "*conscious realization* of salvation"¹ It would puzzle a metaphysician to tell how anything can be *consciously* received without at the same moment being realized. The consciousness that one possesses a thing is itself the realization of the fact. The extent and implications of such possession may be realized more and more with developing experience. Salvation is always realized to some extent the very moment it is received. The acceptance of proffered salvation

¹ See *Faith Papers* by Rev. S. A. Keen, D.D., p. 42. The spirit of the book is excellent, but it is saturated with this harmful error.

is by obedient faith, and the realization immediately follows through the witness of the Spirit.

There is no “witness of faith.” The phrase is a contradiction in terms. Faith witnesses to nothing. In this case, it is only the soul’s persuasion of itself that it is saved. It is not even *faith* in the true sense of that word, but simply intellectual assent to an error, or it may be to a truth resting on evidences not clearly perceived and formulated. Usually the earnest seeker has other and better evidences than the “naked word” on which he believes he is saved, but he has not sufficiently analyzed his experience to be able to state them. If he will reflect, he will see that his condemnation has all been removed before he could believe that he was saved, and this is the real evidence of his pardon. Desponding believers, those who have the faith of a servant, but not the faith of a son, and even unsaved inquirers, may sometimes be argued or sung into a happy frame of mind for the time by means of specious error as well as by truth. Such joy is not the fruit

of the Spirit, but arises from a law of the mind, that whatever is received by the intellect has its corresponding effect in the sensibilities. In the Scriptures, "joy in believing" and "joy in the Holy Ghost" are the same, because the "believing" has been made possible by the direct witness of the Spirit. Such "believing" is filial confidence in the heavenly Father, and results from the reception of the Spirit of adoption. In this sense, it may be said that faith, i.e., personal confidence in the Saviour, is itself a feeling or emotion of the soul. But believing that one is saved is not a feeling. It is merely an intellectual act, and, even when it is an erroneous belief, will be followed by agreeable emotions. The heathen devotee of India chants the praises of Ram with similar feelings, and sometimes weeps for joy. The theory we are opposing really undermines the basis of supernatural religion, and reduces Christian experience to a series of intellectual acts, with corresponding emotional results. To thoughtful minds, it is the most subtle, and therefore the most dangerous, foe to Christianity. The

Christian religion differs from every other in this, that it offers to every believer a divinely wrought certainty in his soul that his sins are forgiven. We do not say that no heathen can attain this, but that his system of religion does not promise it. When we base our salvation upon anything else than this divine testimony in the soul, we have sunk down to the plane of heathen philosophies.

The illustration of receiving a great inheritance through faith in legal documents, and of the realization of the same through actual handling of the wealth inherited, is not pertinent. The documents are not a promise, but an unconditional legal transference. The same fallacy appears in the much-used illustration of "Faith's Bank-Note." It is a promise to pay on demand, and is as good as gold coin. The possessor of a bank-note is not worrying because he does not feel the touch of the equivalent gold. We might add that he does not go to the bank for the gold, because the official paper is a more convenient medium of exchange. The promises of God are said to be payable at sight, to the

order of whosoever believeth. Just here the difference appears. The bank-note is unconditional, just as good for a sinner as for a saint. The promises of God are conditional, never cashed if one asks "amiss." They are not a convenient medium of exchange in the spiritual world, that may be passed from one person to another, irrespective of character. A conditional note is good for nothing till the conditions are met. It is true (and this is what has given currency to the illustration) that after one has been assuredly taken into partnership¹ with God, then he may carry about in his pocket the exceeding great and precious promises, and reckon himself to be so much the richer; but before his adoption he is a spiritual pauper. He has no warrant in any promise to believe that he is adopted. That is a historic transaction between him and the Father. When he has attained unto the faith of a son, he may exclaim, "All things are ours."

If the soul be saved, and have the "witness of faith," what real need is there of a further

¹ John i. 3.

“witness of the Spirit”? Is the first witness not to be trusted? Is not this really a putting of the cart before the horse, of the fruit before the tree, of the indirect witness before the direct? And whence comes this “witness of faith?” Is it from God, or is it self-originated in the seeking soul? In the latter case, it is a false witness; in the former, it is a quiet form of the direct witness of the Spirit. The so-called “witness of faith” is often nothing else than the gentle persuasion of the Spirit, and may, or may not, be followed sooner or later by more demonstrative exercise of the Spirit’s power. This has also been miscalled “salvation by promise” and “salvation by power.” The distinction has no foundation in fact. Actual salvation is always by power, however gently felt. Salvation by promise is only potential, not yet realized.

Some have pressed into the service of this erroneous theory Mark xi. 24, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.” The Revised Version makes the statement still

stronger, "Believe that ye *received* them." Here Dean Alford's comment is the best of all. "The reception spoken of is the determination in the divine counsels coincident with the request — believe that when you asked you received, and the fulfilment shall come." Observe that this is a promise made to believers, and not to unsaved sinners. The context shows that it is an exhortation to personal confidence in God. In order to its exercise, one must be aided by the inwrought assurance of the Spirit, that the thing asked for is in accordance with the will of God. The mountain will not be removed except in answer to *inspired* faith. The Spirit must help our infirmities, and make intercession within us, according to the divine will.¹ This is something vastly different from the drawing of a conclusion from premises and resting upon it. Watson's comment is well worth our notice, "An ill use has sometimes been made of this passage, as though it meant that while praying, whatsoever we believe, that is, persuade ourselves

¹ Rom. viii. 26, 27.

that we receive, we *do* receive, — an absurdity and self-contradiction.”

Some advocates of this error, too, claim to have found support in Wesley’s well-known three steps of justifying faith. He says there must be : —

1. A divine evidence and conviction that God is able and willing to save.
2. A divine evidence and conviction that He is able and willing to save *now*.
3. To this needs to be added a divine evidence and conviction that He *doeth* it.

The phrase “divine evidence and conviction” is Wesley’s accurate translation of the Greek word *ελεγχος* found in Heb. xi. 1. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen.” The mistake made by many is in supposing that according to Wesley this divine evidence and conviction in the three successive steps of faith rest on the same grounds; i.e., scriptural truth or promises. He never taught this. The evidence of the first two propositions is found in the gospel; that of the third is the direct wit-

ness of the Spirit in the soul. Wesley himself calls the use made of his definitions by some recent teachers "flatly absurd."¹

A really converted person may have erroneous notions about the witness of the Spirit, and so get into despondency. He is not condemned, but uncertain. Such an one may be gladdened by grasping the promises of the written word. But to suppose that he has been praying, obeying, conscientiously living ten or twenty years, and all the time unsaved because his intellect did not assent to some theological dogmas or conclusions drawn from promises of Scripture, is to dishonor God. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"² Oh, let us worship the GREAT God, who will save penitent sinners in spite of intellectual perplexities.

It may be admitted that the various evidences hitherto mentioned may afford some-

¹ See Watson's Life of Wesley, pp. 150-155, where the whole question is fully and clearly treated.

² Micah vi. 8.

times a probability of various degrees that one is saved. The probability may become so great as to exclude at times all actual doubt, especially in a mind not constitutionally inclined to investigation; and a good-natured, easy-going, unaggressive Christian may be the result. Some minds can content themselves with a probability almost as well as with a certainty, but they are not of the noblest type. Then, too, it takes a vast amount more of evidence to assure some than is required by others. There are those who assert dogmatically that they *know* a thing, when the truth is, their asserted knowledge is a mere opinion or fancy, resting upon no evidence whatever. But all the evidences previously mentioned combined can never produce complete certainty of one's present salvation; and in so weighty a matter the soul ought not to be satisfied so long as additional evidence may be secured.

VI.

DIRECT WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

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WE return to the question, How may one know that one is saved? Must this be left a matter of probable conjecture? Will God adopt a son into His spiritual family and not give him definite notification of the fact? Will a Father never reveal himself to His child? It cannot be. Infinite power, prompted by infinite love, and guided by infinite wisdom, will find a way of manifestation. God has promised to give to the penitent believer absolute knowledge of his salvation,—knowledge the most perfect that the human mind is capable of receiving. The direct witness of the Spirit comes into the soul as a spiritual intuition. It is an authentic, first-hand declaration from the Father Himself. It is a divine notification from the court of Heaven immediately to the believ-

ing penitent. There is no intervening medium of communication. He requires no instrumentality whatever. Knowledge is ordinarily conveyed to the human mind through the avenues of the bodily senses. My thought expresses itself in spoken or written word, in visible signs or picture, in the waving of a handkerchief, or in the gentle pressure of the hand. Thus through sight, hearing, or touch, thoughts and emotions corresponding to my own may be awakened in the soul of another. But we must not suppose that the eternal Spirit is confined to such means of communication. Indeed, we should naturally expect Him who is Spirit to act upon our spirits independently of such media, and we recognize such action in the conscience. The Spirit of God comes into direct contact with the spirit of man. "Ye in me and I in you." The trusting soul is the home of God, and God is the eternal home of the soul. The thought of it is enough to make our "spirit beat its mortal bars." Faber must have realized this truth when he wrote:—

“ But God is not so far away
As even to be near;
He is within, our spirit is
The home He holds most dear.

• • • • •
Down in earth’s duskiest vale where’er
My pilgrimage may be,
Thou, Lord, wilt be a ready home,
Always at hand for me.”

And so He who formed the eye, the ear, the hand, and dwells within us, can surely impress a truth upon us without the aid of any bodily senses. Thus He whispers of condemnation unto fear, or of forgiveness unto peace. What is this witness? No one can adequately tell. Even those who have received it cannot describe it. Like many other things, it can be known only experimentally. All who have attempted a definition unite substantially in saying that *the witness of the Spirit is a persuasion or conviction wrought directly in the mind of the believer, that his sins are forgiven, and that he is now a child of God.*

The Holy Spirit, acting upon the moral consciousness of the sinner, works conviction of sin with a feeling of condemnation and “a cer-

tain fearful looking for of judgment." The same Spirit, acting under changed conditions, produces in the consciousness of the believer a conviction of pardon, whereby he cries, "Abba, Father!" The result is peace, rest, a sense of security, love, comfort, joy, and all the fruit of the Spirit.

The apostle, writing to the Galatians,¹ says, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." The same Spirit that rested and abode upon Christ, when the voice said, "Thou art my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," has been promised to abide in the heart of every true believer, whispering constantly, "Thou art my beloved child in whom I am well pleased;" and the spontaneous response of the heart is, "Thou art my heavenly Father, whose will is my delight." The Hebrew word, Abba, was the joyous exclamation of the Jewish converts when first they realized their true relation to God.

The same apostle, writing to the Ephesians,²

¹ Gal. iv. 6. ² Eph. i. 13. Cf. 2 Cor. i. 22.

says, that having believed in Christ, they were “sealed with that Holy Spirit of the promise which is an earnest of our inheritance.” This seal is the mark of royal ownership, which no man is allowed to break. It is the soul’s confirmation that it belongs to God. The *earnest* is a part payment in kind, made in advance as pledge that the full inheritance will be given in due time. It is a foretaste of the bliss of heaven; for nothing better, in time or eternity, can be conceived than to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The definite article in this and several parallel passages specializes this promise of the Father as the greatest he has made. It is the gift that makes real and valuable all other gifts.

To the Thessalonians the gospel came “not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.”¹ Therefore were they filled with joy, and from them sounded out like a trumpet the word of the Lord throughout Macedonia and Achaia. The saints at Corinth are declared to be “temples of the Holy Ghost.” The Colossians possessed

¹ 1 Thess. i. 5.

the *ἐπίγνωσις*, the full or complete knowledge of the mystery of God, even Christ in them the hope of glory.¹ The Church at Rome was cautioned that “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ,” i. e., the Holy Ghost, as the context and parallel passages plainly show, “he is none of His.”² The strangers scattered throughout Asia Minor rejoiced in believing “with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”³ John says, “He that believeth on the Son hath the witness in himself;” viz., the inwrought revelation that “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”⁴ Paul’s first question to certain believers at Ephesus was, “Did ye in believing receive the Holy Ghost?”⁵ Not some time after ye believed, as certain ones will have it who press an erroneous translation into the service of a false theory; but did ye, when ye publicly professed your faith in Christ by baptism of water, also receive the baptism of the Spirit?

¹ Col. ii. 27; iii. 2. ² Rom. viii. 9. ³ 1 Pet. i. 8.

⁴ 1 John v. 10, 11. Cf. John xvii. 3.

⁵ Acts xix. 2. Cf. ii. 38.

These citations are sufficient to show that, in the days of the apostles, no one was considered converted if he were destitute of the direct witness of the Spirit. The experience has been known by many throughout the history of the Church. We have seen how, with the establishment of the confessional, the Roman Catholic Church came to deny this as the common privilege of believers. High Calvinism, with its doctrine of unconditional election and final perseverance of the elect, was cautious enough to maintain that only a few elect of the elect might have the direct witness of the Spirit, or full assurance; since if all the elect should receive it, there would be a clear division of the sheep from the goats in this life, and it might lead to practical antinomianism. Methodism was a great revival of this doctrine; and her success in every land has been proportioned to the fidelity with which it has been preached, and to the faith with which it has been accepted and translated into experience. Wesley testifies that ninety-nine out of a hundred of those converted under his ministry

received the direct witness of the Spirit. By most evangelical theologians it is now allowed to be the common privilege of believers.

The direct witness of the Spirit has been called a spiritual intuition. By an intuition is meant a necessary, universal, and self-evident truth. That every effect must have an adequate cause is such a truth, immediately perceived by all who have come to years of understanding. That two and two make four, or that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line, is a mathematical intuition, admitted by all who have the capacity to think. That there is a difference between right and wrong, and that we ought to do the right and reject the wrong, are moral intuitions recognized by all morally responsible persons. These truths need no proof, and cannot be disproved. They are at once assented to without argument or evidence. So one knows immediately and without reasoning when he feels condemnation for sin, and he knows equally well when that condemnation is removed. Its re-

moval is due to an inwrought conviction that his sins are forgiven. He cannot explain that conviction, neither can he rid himself of it except by voluntary transgression of known moral law. In its clearest manifestations the testimony of the Spirit affords knowledge undoubted and undoubtable. It is the testimony of all who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost, that they can no more doubt their pardon and divine sonship than they can doubt the shining of the noonday sun when his beams fall full upon the vision. How may one know when he has received the direct witness of the Spirit? The reply has been well made, "We do not need lanterns to see the sun rise."¹

We do not mean to affirm that the divine testimony is always equally clear. It may be obscured by reason of physical infirmities, temptations, weakness of faith, or ignorance of

¹ See *Love Enthroned*, by Rev. Daniel Steele, D.D., p. 226. This book is remarkable for its spiritual insight. On p. 382, and in one or two sentences elsewhere, is advocated the erroneous view of justifying or sanctifying faith repudiated in this book. Dr. Steele has since publicly and repeatedly corrected his error.

gospel promises. The corruptible body presses down upon the soul. Sickness may disorder the mind and produce spiritual darkness. Pre-conceptions and erroneous notions may dim the light that is in us. The philosophers, or a small minority of them, have disputed all the intuitions. Some have argued that among other intelligences two and two may make five instead of four, but such a supposition does not disturb ordinary calculations. Though the invisible things of God are already seen in the works of creation, yet there always have been those who do not like to retain God in their knowledge. Hence they become vain in their reasonings, and their foolish hearts are darkened.¹ Thus the light that is in them is changed into darkness.

“The owl-eyed atheist,
Sailing with obscure wing athwart the sky,
And hooting at the glorious sun in heaven,
Cries out, Where is it?”

One must meet the conditions in order to receive even intuitional knowledge. In spite

¹ Rom. i. 19-25.

of the darkness of the wilfully and ignorantly blind, it remains true that "we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God."¹

But may not one be mistaken, and think some other experience to be that afforded by the witness? He may be. Doubtless some are. Various emotional experiences, an unusually strong excitement, an abnormal state of mind, a feverish imagination, might be thought to be the direct witness of the Spirit; and hence the necessity of having also the indirect witness, that is, the fruit of the Spirit revealed in consciousness and manifested in daily life. The lack of the latter proves that the former is fallacious. We must try the spirits whether they be of God. The infallible test is a Christ-like life interpreted by the Christ-like. Many subjective experiences might be mistaken for the direct witness, but the direct witness in its fulness cannot be mistaken for anything else. It is of a unique character and undoubtable.

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 12.

One may doubt, after he has lost it through sin, whether he ever had it; but while he possesses it, to doubt his divine sonship is an impossibility.¹ He sings with Faber,—

“I know not what it is to doubt;
My heart is ever gay.”

Perhaps an illustration, taken from Arthur's “Tongue of Fire” and somewhat modified, may make this point a little clearer. Suppose a prisoner to be confined from birth in a dark dungeon, where only the faintest light has ever shone. He has the power of sight but has

¹ “This change is known directly, and the certainty attaching to it is a certainty that has the sanction of all science. The Christian can no more doubt it than he can doubt his own existence. His certainty respecting it is complete. His experience is knowledge pure and simple. . . . I wish to emphasize the fact that this basal element in Christian experience does not admit of doubt, but carries with it the highest validity. And in order that it should be valued at its true worth, it is not needful that the Christian should know the day and moment of his conversion. The fact of the change is all-sufficient. Even the child brought up from the first within the Christian fold knows that there is a life within which is altogether different from the sinful life of nature.” — PROF. STEARNS'S *Evidence of Christian Experience*, p. 212.

never had the opportunity to exercise it beyond the limits of his dark cell. He has been told of the sun, and his latent power of seeing cries out for gratification. He exercises his imagination about the nature of the sun and how he shall feel when he beholds it. Yet no one can describe the sun to him so that he can get any conception even faintly resembling it. His fancy compels him to form mental images, yet he knows on reflection that they must be far from the reality. But never mind. The reality will be more splendid than the imagination. Do not urge the seeker to form no pre-conception of the blessing sought. You may as well tell him to stop thinking about the subject that is dearest to his heart. God can do exceeding abundantly above all that he can ask or think. The heart of man has never conceived the things that are prepared for those who love God. Well, the prisoner is promised that on a certain day he shall be led forth to see the sun. Bright visions fill his soul. He cannot sleep, or direct his thought to any other subject. If weariness overcome him, his dreams are

filled with fancies about the sun, and often he wakes with his heart overflowing with desire.

At length the day arrives. He is led forth into a room where a taper is burning. "Is this the sun?" he asks in a half-disappointed tone. It is beautiful, but does not satisfy his hopes. He is led on into a more spacious apartment where a bright lamp is shining. "Is *this* the sun?" he asks more eagerly and hopefully. He feels not quite satisfied, though he delays to look upon it with pleasure. He is led on into a large covered court where an electric lamp sends forth a glare of light. "Is **THIS** the sun?" he cries excitedly. His previous dreams are realized, and yet the question reveals a doubt in his mind. Presently a broad door is flung open and the beams of the noon-day sun fall through an unclouded sky full upon him. He leaps for joy and shouts, "THIS IS THE SUN." No longer he makes an inquiry but a positive assertion; and, doubtless, the counter assertions of all the world combined would not convince him that he had not seen the sun.

So the imprisoned soul, "fast bound in sin and nature's night," has heard wonderful tales told of Him who is the Light of the world. A desire to see Him is awakened, and he commences groping blindly in the dark. Some glimmering ray of hope shines upon him from the prophetic word, relieving his self-despair. He gives heed to it as to "a light that shineth in a dark place," and at first wonders if this be the sun. As he advances by consecration and resultant faith, some deep emotional experiences are granted him, and perhaps he rests satisfied for a time, thinking he has attained all. But the Spirit does His officework, and leads him on. At some Bethel or Pisgah or Mount of Transfiguration he gets a heavenly vision, or a glorious prospect is unrolled, or his eyes are dazzled with celestial light. For the time he is contented, and says, "I'll build me a tabernacle and abide here." But in some never to be forgotten day comes his personal Pentecost, and the Sun of righteousness in His ineffable splendor rises on his spiritual vision with healing in His wings. He is raised up to sit

with Christ in the Heavenlies. Doubts and fears and the “restless, unsatisfied longing” have flown away. He has arrived at “the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.”¹

Now all the other evidences heretofore mentioned come to him with multiplied force, and make assurance doubly sure. He feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart, and a responsive love welling up within. A new love for the brethren is felt. Joy ebbs and flows like the ocean. Peace, like a mighty river, flows on, ever broadening and deepening, toward the sea. The promises of God are yea and amen. He lives on the confines of heaven. Such fruit of the Spirit, called the indirect witness, necessarily follows the direct witness, and may easily be distinguished from the modified approval of conscience and from the first fruits of the Spirit that arise from preventient grace. The direct witness is the tree; the indirect is the fruit of it. One cannot exist without the other, but logically and in fact the tree pre-

¹ Eph. iv. 13.

cedes the fruit ; and as in the natural world the abundance of fruit is determined by the size and life of the tree, so the clearness and fulness of the abiding Comforter determine the measure and constancy of the fruit of the Spirit. If you would be happy and useful, be filled with the Spirit.

And here we deem it important to correct a current error. To "receive the Holy Ghost," to be "filled with the Holy Ghost," to be "baptized with the Spirit," according to New Testament phraseology, mean substantially the same thing, and have reference to the *manifestation* of the Spirit's presence in the soul of the believer, and it may be also to beholders. An unconscious reception of the Spirit is a delusion and a snare. An unfelt, unrecognized guest is no Comforter. As the omnipresent Spirit He must be conceived as existing in every one, yet unrecognized because sinners will not listen to His voice, or they attribute the manifestations of His presence to other causes. He "comes in" to make His abode in us when we recognize His influence. In various ways and degrees

He reveals His presence to believers ; and when His power or blessing is specially felt, a person is said to be “baptized” or “filled” with the Holy Ghost. So the apostles and early Church were repeatedly “baptized” with the Spirit. The distinction between *the* baptism and *a* baptism is a discovery of superficial exegesis. The greatest spiritual blessing of a man’s life thus far he may call his personal Pentecost, but he mistakes and robs himself if he concludes that nothing greater can follow. In religious experience one needs in some sense to forget the things behind, and stretch forth to better things before. Just as the convicting Spirit dwells in the breast of every sinner, yet at times manifests His power in a special manner, and then we say the sinner is “under conviction,” so the witnessing Spirit dwells constantly in every true believer, yet at times reveals His presence in special ways. Then the believer is said to be baptized or filled with the Spirit. The more frequent such baptisms, the better. They are needed to produce the highest results. Recollections of the past will not

long drive one's chariot wheels. And so it happens that some inefficient Christians can tell of a marvellous baptism of power — away off in the past. All fruitage is on recent growths.

It is to be noted that the indirect witness adds nothing to the certainty of pardon and adoption already given by the direct witness. The soul that receives the seal of the Spirit knows immediately that it is saved without reflection and without awaiting results. The Holy Spirit first testifies *to* our spirit, and then conjointly *with* our spirit. A convict receives intelligence of his pardon from the governor of the State. This may produce at once peace, love, joy, and may lead to a great change in outward conduct. Now, how does he know that he is pardoned? By his emotional experiences or outward conduct? Not at all. He knows it only by the declaration of the governor personally, or officially made known to him. For reassurance he examines the legal document, just as Bunyan's Christian looks at the scroll which he carries in his bosom. If he loses this his joy and peace have flown. The fruit of the Spirit

must be felt and manifested, otherwise the professor of religion and his acquaintances must infer that he is either deceived or a deceiver.

The two witnesses are related as faith to works. A man is justified by faith alone, but not by a faith unaccompanied by good works (*fide sola sed non solitaria*). Good works follow of necessity a true faith. They are not the condition, but the effect, of justification, and prove the genuine character of the faith. Just so the believer is sealed and assured by the Spirit alone, and the fruit follows. The external fruit, such as gentleness, goodness, temperance, etc., may or may not convince the unbelieving world that the believer is really sealed by the Spirit. The holiest Person that ever lived was crucified as a malefactor. The subjective fruit, i.e., love, joy, peace, faith, may be obscured during the time of trial, while the direct witness is resplendent in the soul.

VII.

MODE OF THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS.

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THE statements made concerning the indubitable character of the Spirit's testimony in the most remarkable states of religious experience may serve to indicate the goal toward which the seeker may press forward. It would be a mistake to suppose that all Christians at their conversion receive an equally clear and satisfying assurance of divine acceptance. The Spirit divideth to every one severally as He will, and deals with no two souls precisely alike. This infinite variability may depend upon the age, temperament, religious instruction, health, and previous manner of life, of the seekers, as well as upon the life-work for which the Spirit is preparing them. Many persons have been exceedingly perplexed and distressed by seeking some strange, miraculous experience, such as they have heard or read of. They expect to

see visions or to dream dreams; to hear a mysterious voice speaking words of assurance; to sensibly realize God's presence; to be filled with supernatural joy; to feel the transports of divine love; to have the soul flooded with light and song; to behold all nature transformed, so that the birds sing more sweetly and the trees and fields shine with the glory of the celestial city. We doubt not all these things have been experienced, but they are exceptional and are not necessary to full assurance. It is the extraordinary experience that gets into books, and is retailed in meetings of prayer and testimony. There is such a natural fondness for what is surprising and wonderful! So many would like to be converted like St. Paul; and some who have heard of the Philippian jailer are waiting for an earthquake before they will seek salvation. Such overlook the experience of another convert at Philippi, Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things spoken by Paul," and who modestly referred her divine acceptance to the decision of the apostle, saying, "If ye have judged me

to be faithful to the Lord.”¹ Notice, too, the conversion of the Ethiopian, who simply believed the expository preaching of Philip, was straightway baptized, and “went on his way rejoicing.”² No earthquake here or bright light from heaven; only a providential meeting with an itinerant preacher.

Let us illustrate. Here is a man who for years has hardened his heart against the pleadings of the Spirit, and has wilfully and repeatedly broken the commandments of God. In some crisis of his life he is led to moral reflection, and realizes profoundly his sinfulness and lost condition. His soul is burdened with guilt and condemnation. He prays, and prays, till he gets to the point of self-despair. Then he looks beyond himself for help. The truth begins to dawn upon him that Christ died for sinners. He lays hold upon it with the energy of a drowning man, and exclaims, “He died for me.” It seems to him as though that truth had been expressly revealed to him from heaven. His burden of condemnation falls

¹ Acts xvi. 14, 15.

² Acts viii. 26-39.

off instantly. He feels as though he could fly. It is a great deliverance, a transition from darkness into marvellous light. If he has a brilliant fancy, he may relate his experience thrillingly, and his rhetorical figures may be taken by some of his hearers for plain matter of fact. He tells of the conversation he had with the Devil and then with the Lord, of a vision of the cross, heaven or hell,¹ etc.

Now, in most books on religious experience, as well as in revival hymns and preaching, the conversion just delineated is the typical one, and the conclusion too often reached is that every convert should have a similar experience. Here is the way one author describes conversion: "When first the soul emerges out of the darkness of the horrible pit; when, after a long night of sorrow and fear and almost despair, it receives through the Spirit of adoption the happy assurance of God's forgiving love, — the evidence is usually so bright and clear as to be without a cloud."² No wonder, with

¹ See Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

² *The Witness of the Spirit*, by Rev. D. Walton, p. 137, a very clear and valuable book.

such antecedents; but many Christians have never passed through such preliminary stages, and it is not necessary that they should. So a familiar hymn runs, —

“From the darkness of sin and despair,
Out into the light of His love.”

Such expressions are perplexing to conscientious young people reared in Christian homes. They never felt the darkness of sin and despair. They have not been in the “horrible pit,” and it is unwise for those who have not had the experience of the Psalmist to use such extravagant language. The Scriptures deal principally with the experiences of adult sinners, and appeals are made to those who are sunken in the vices of heathenism. The transition from “blood guiltiness” to “cleanness of heart,” from heathen darkness and vice into the light of gospel truth and purity, should not furnish the type of conversion for such as have been influenced from infancy by the Christian religion. For the average attendant of our Sunday-schools and churches, we need a gos-

pel founded on Christ's invitation to children, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," and upon the narrative of the young man whom He loved for his morality and earnestness of spirit.¹

Let us look at another type of Christian experience. Here is a young lady who has been trained up in a Christian home and in the Sunday-school. She has never doubted the fundamental truths of the Bible, has lived conscientiously, and sometimes, if not regularly, prayed in secret. In some revival she is persuaded that she ought openly to confess her desire and purpose to be a Christian. After some hesitation she does so, and perhaps asks the prayers of Christians. Something within whispers approval. There is peace, rest, and a sense of security in her soul. The experience is not entirely new, but in larger measure than ever felt before. As she goes on in the performance of Christian duties, and contemplates more and more "the truth as it is in Jesus," peace, love, joy, and victory over sin abound.

¹ Mark x. 17-22.

Her experience does not appear marvellous to herself or to others; and when she compares it with the testimony of the one above mentioned, she may be led to doubt whether she be really converted. Perhaps she never needed to be converted. Perhaps from infancy she has grown up to pray, and to love and serve Christ. Samuel, John the Baptist, or Timothy may furnish the type of her experience. Instead of lamenting that her Christian experience is not like that of an old hardened sinner at his conversion, she ought to thank God that it is not. Yet it is her privilege to pray for the Comforter, and this will satisfy her spiritual longings. If she will calmly reflect a little, she will not be able to doubt that her sins are all forgiven. She has such an inwrought conviction, and this is all that is essential to the witness of the Spirit.

Now, there are all varieties of experience between the extreme cases mentioned. Some surrender to God quickly, and the witness comes instantly; others yield gradually, and the transition in experience is not so sudden. Some abandon themselves to Christ by a des-

perate exercise of faith ; others believe slowly, after much examination of evidence. The in-wrought conviction that one is saved is with some largely intellectual ; with others it is more emotional. Some trust tremblingly, waveringly, examining themselves more than looking unto Jesus. Others can say :—

“ Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I’ve lost sight of all beside;
So enchain’d my spirit’s vision
Looking at the Crucified.”

A youth of fifteen years throughout one day was specially serious. Nothing in his external conduct revealed it. He was meditating a great question of duty, and coming to the most important decision of his life. He had lived conscientiously in a Christian home, and always indefinitely purposed to be a Christian. He felt no burden of condemnation, but a certain unrest, uncertainty about the long future, and indecision. The question of a public expression of the purpose to be a follower of Christ and of identification with the Church was weighing upon his mind. Toward night, at a well-

remembered spot, he settled the question by saying silently in his soul, "I WILL." That instant there came over him such a sense of peace, rest, and security as has never since been felt more truly, though more intelligently and deeply. He did not suppose then that he was converted. He thought he must go to the church and "go forward for prayers," and then something strange would take place in his soul. In this he was disappointed. Three weeks of such seeking brought nothing new but perplexities. Job's "interpreter, one among a thousand,"¹ was not there. For many years he struggled along, living on the right side of doubt, fearing God and working righteousness, hungrily reading everything he could get on religious experience and the office-work of the Spirit, cross-examining hundreds of other Christians, and praying sometimes all day and all night. He studied, thought, and prayed his way out into the sunlight of full assurance. All this was his providential preparation to write this little book, in order that others may not follow

¹ Job xxxiii. 23.

his weary course. He had the witness of the Spirit at the very beginning, but was led into perplexities and uncertainty by erroneous interpretations of Scripture and experience, and by vain theologizings on the part of so many others.

NO DELAY ON GOD'S PART.

It is important here to add a caution against the teachings of those who say, Yield all to God in faith, and wait for the witness of the Spirit, which for some unknown reason may be delayed for hours, days, or weeks. Such have confounded the witness of pardon with some special manifestation that afterward may be given. Those who have read Finney's "Autobiography" remember that the great revivalist was led by the Spirit into the woods to pray. He continued some hours in prayer, and all at once found himself bounding over the hill toward the village, saying in himself, "If I ever do get converted, I will preach the gospel." He already had all that is essential to the witness of the Spirit, but did not know how to interpret his changed state of heart, till the

baptism of the Holy Ghost for service was given to him the following night. It is not an unusual thing to hear Christians who have received a marvellous uplift in religious experience declare that they were never converted before. The former experience has now with such no glory, by reason of this new glory that excelleth. Yet it is unwise and misleading to depreciate the still, small voice in favor of the rushing, mighty wind. God is just as surely in the former as in the latter.

It is a dangerous doctrine to teach that God, after the conditions have been fully met, will delay to forgive a penitent soul or to notify him of the fact, in order, as some say, to test and develop faith. Suppose his faith does not endure the test. In what state is the soul then left? Has it been saved and lost without knowing either? The saying of the colored boy is here pertinent, that he wouldn't like to get religion and not know it, for fear he might lose it and never miss it.

The worst feature of the doctrine is that it encourages many to believe they are saved

before they have fully met the conditions of salvation. They cull out any statement they please from the Bible, call it a promise, and rest upon it. Their salvation is only their good opinion of their own performance. This is unconscious Phariseeism. If innocently led into this delusion by others, in a short time they find out their mistake, and seek salvation by power. "Only believe and wait for the witness!" Waiting for it in idle indifference will never bring it, and waiting for it with longing desires may make the heart sick through deferred hope. No! God does not so tantalize His children. The writer of this was for a time led to accept and advocate this error, and it produced great perplexity and unrest. The error arises from not separating the non-essential, occasional accompaniments from the in-wrought conviction of pardon that removes all sense of condemnation. Whenever the conditions are fully met, instantly pardon is administered, and the burden of guilt is removed. Just as the door of a bank-safe opens easily to one who knows and uses the combination, so

mercy's door swings wide to him who tries to open it in the prescribed way. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you."

The subject will be made clearer if we indicate the successive steps in arriving at salvation :—

1. Conviction of sin, common to all men, but intensified by moral reflection and contemplation of scriptural truth. The agent of conviction is the Holy Spirit, who utilizes a multitude of occasions. The result is a profound sense of guilt and condemnation.

2. Repentance, or turning away from all sin, and hearty surrender to God. It is a change of purpose and practice, expressed by a decision of the will, and should be distinguished from *penitence*, which has reference to the emotions, and is ordinarily more felt after conversion.

3. A divine conviction wrought directly by God in the soul, or through the instrumentality of gospel truth, that He is able and willing now to pardon sin.

4. In consequence, the seeker casts himself

upon the mercy of God, however revealed, and trusts for pardon. This is justifying faith.

5. A divine conviction wrought, not through gospel truth, but directly by the Spirit, that He doeth it, i.e., doth now forgive all sins.

As a result of this, the essential and constant elements of subjective Christian experience are as follows :—

1. Freedom from condemnation. The sense of guilt is removed, and the believer realizes that “there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”

2. Hence arises “peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,” the measure of which may vary according to disposition and circumstances.

3. Rest of soul, instead of the previous unrest produced by sin, doubts, and uncertainty.

4. A sense of security, in place of previous fear of death and dread of the judgment.

5. Filial confidence in the heavenly Father. This may be increased by grasping the exceeding great and precious promises.

6. Love to God and man recognized and measured by cheerful self-sacrifice in order to please God and serve humanity.

7. Habitual victory over sin, while the power of temptation is decreasingly felt. These feelings constantly characterize the experience of one who has "faith in God," and lives in a state of justification. In addition, he may have at times ecstatic joy, spiritual manifestations, baptisms of light and power, and third heaven experiences. These are not to be sought for. It is better to fix the eye of faith upon Christ rather than upon any subjective experience. Seek to be like Him and to be filled with the Spirit. Sometimes it needs to be definitely included in the consecration that you will thankfully accept whatever experience God may choose to give, leaving all within and without to His will.

VIII.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS?

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How may one attain unto the knowledge of sins forgiven? The answer has already been briefly stated, yet may need to be more fully unfolded. The conditions are two: entire surrender to God, and simple confidence in Christ the Saviour. There must be first of all complete submission of the will to the will of God. Opposition to the divine will is the very essence of sin, and must be fully given up before pardon is possible. Here is the principal difficulty with those who have been trained up to believe the truths of the Christian religion. There is some darling sin that they do not wish to abandon, or some duty that they shrink from performing. They say, anything but that. They parley with the convicting Spirit, and seek to make compromises. They try to tutor their consciences, and to persuade themselves that

this little selfish indulgence is not sinful, or that they can somehow escape from that disagreeable duty. They give themselves the benefit of the doubt, and assert that they have yielded all so far as they know or to the best of their ability, when a faint suspicion to the contrary is lurking in the soul. They do not respond with a hearty YES to all the test questions presented by the Spirit in times of prayer. They want to be Christians, *but* they can't give up certain amusements, or forsake certain associations, or publicly confess Christ by baptism or any other sign. The objections are innumerable and often trivial. Some will sell Christ now for less than thirty pieces of silver. All such seeking is of no avail. The unchangeable terms are unconditional surrender, complete abandonment of one's self to the will of God.

Now, to tell one in this unsubmissive state of mind to *believe* is to endanger the soul. Real faith is impossible, and a substitute for faith may be intellectual assent to some passage of Scripture or inference drawn therefrom. Almost invariably the soul that lacks assurance

has not surrendered. The difficulty can be detected by close cross-questioning. When full submission is reached, the exercise of faith will be as natural and easy as breathing. Faith is spontaneous to the obedient soul.

Indeed, this entire self-abandonment is with most persons not to be distinguished from the exercise of faith. It is a committal or deposit of the soul with God, and is itself the highest expression of faith, since one will never unconditionally submit to a person in whom he has no confidence. An outward submission may be induced by fear, but the real inward submission of the heart must be based on confidence. Hence the last item of surrender often marks the transitional point from darkness to light, from doubt to certainty. This is almost always the case with young people who have been religiously trained. At this point above all others the winner of souls must be wise. Press the seeker with searching truth till no doubt remains in the mind of the seeker himself about the completeness of his surrender. To fail here is to lose all.

With some the chief difficulty is the exercise of faith. Such have been trying to save themselves by good resolves and works of righteousness. Sometimes a conscientious heathen is found practising penances and making pilgrimages in order to arrive at assurance of pardon. To such a one Christ is preached as the only Saviour from sin, and accepting Him by faith he realizes at once the witness of the Spirit. He already had the spirit of complete obedience to the will of God, and, like the Philippian jailer, did not need to be told to repent. So in Christian lands one burdened with the guilt of sin may submit fully to God, and still have doubts about His willingness to pardon such a sinner as he. Such a one must be exhorted to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," to abandon himself to God's mercy and grace as revealed in the gift of His Son. Such faith is not mere intellectual assent to promises, but personal confidence in the Promiser. Genuine faith ultimately rests in the personal character of God. Because He is holy, faith-

ful, just, merciful, and loving, therefore He will forgive sin and save to the uttermost.

“Have faith in God.” Lovingly, obediently trust Him. Even one who has never heard of Christ may believe in God unto the salvation of his soul. All one needs to know in order to be saved is, —

1. That he is a sinner.
2. That God can and will forgive sin.

The heathen know the first full well; though sin, by means of the express commandment of God, has not yet become exceeding sinful. The second proposition they are led to believe by religious instincts, and hence their sacrifices and prayers. It assists faith mightily to know that God has revealed His mercy and love in the person of His only begotten Son, and hence it becomes our duty and privilege to send the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Yet those heathen who “fear God and work righteousness,” who cry out for mercy in their comparative darkness, hear the response of God in the soul, and realize in some degree of clearness

the witness of the Spirit. Our missionaries are confirming these statements with wonderful illustrations of salvation in the heathen world. Our heavenly Father seeks all his lost children, and leaves no one without hope and light sufficient to render his neglect of salvation inexcusable.

We do well to remember that orthodoxy is not essential to personal salvation. Even one who has an erroneous conception of the person and office-work of Christ may still be assisted in the exercise of saving faith by contemplating the life, death, and character of Jesus. He is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour.¹ Accept Him as such, and settle your theology afterwards. We have need to be very charitable, because all the saved cannot arrive at the same theological conclusions. “Is thy heart as mine? If so, give me thy hand.”

An observer turns his telescope to the skies to find some star which an astronomer has told him is hidden in the depths of space. He points the instrument in the direction indicated

¹ *Acts v. 31.*

by the latitude and longitude of the astronomical chart. He searches a long time without finding the star. At last the axis of the telescope becomes coincident with the ray of light streaming from the distant orb, and straightway the shining star is photographed in the chamber of his soul. So when the telescope of faith is completely adjusted to the divine will, assisted by the revelations of the Chart, light streams down from the skies, and the Day-star arises in the heart. Then knowledge blends with faith.

IX.

THE ABIDING WITNESS.

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So much stress has been laid by many upon the witness of the Spirit *to* our spirit at the time of forgiveness and adoption, that they have failed to emphasize sufficiently the importance of the constant witnessing of the Spirit *with* our spirit all along the Christian's journey. Many are looking back for the evidence of their salvation to an experience attained years ago. It is not strange that the moment of transition from condemnation to peace should never be forgotten. The contrast was then more vivid than ever it could be subsequently. Still, it is the Christian's privilege to grow in grace and to realize more and more divine communion. The evidence of his present salvation may every day become more full and satisfying. Amid all changes, inward and outward, and eddying whirls of temptation and strife, the

undercurrent of peace and assurance should roll on, ever growing deeper and stronger. Some have taught that the witness of the Spirit is intermittent. It is to be feared that too often this is true in fact, yet it need not be so. Many testify that the witness has been uninterrupted for many years. We recall the testimony of an aged preacher, that for forty years, since the moment of his conversion, he had not been without the direct witness of the Spirit. This accords with the scriptural representation of the witness as a *seal* that cannot be broken except by sin ; as an *earnest* or pledge to be retained till full payment of the inheritance.

“ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his inmost soul [as the seraphic Fletcher well rendered it] shall flow rivers of living water.” After half a century of experience and reflection John added his comment, “ But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that

believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The Holy Spirit in the soul is a perennial spring, sending forth continually life-giving streams. Its waters refresh the soul itself. The mighty river, biggest at the fountain head, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb, appears in the vision of Ezekiel¹ issuing from the earthly sanctuary as a rill, and flowing down by the south side of the altar, where it mingles with sacrificial blood. The stream grows till it becomes "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." Wherever it flows, it transforms death into life. It springs up in every believer's heart, and flows forth with similar results. It returns unto God in adoring love, just as descending rain mounts again to the skies.

"That which the fountain sends forth returns again to the fountain."

It is said that on that last day of the feast the High Priest took a golden pitcher and,

¹ Ezek. xlviij. 1-12.

attended by a procession of priests, singers, and musicians, went to the pool of Siloam. He filled his pitcher, and returned with music and demonstrations of joy, to pour out the water at the south side of the altar. The procession was called "the joy of the waters;" and a Jewish proverb said, "He who has not seen the joy of the waters knows not what rejoicing is." The proverb is still truer if applied to those who know the joy of the Lord. A glad procession is marching upward to the New Jerusalem with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads and in their hearts.

Why could not the Holy Spirit in His fulness be given till after the glorification of Jesus? Was the intercession of the Godman necessary to obtain it? Was it the reward of His finished work, which He at once outpoured upon His followers?

The Holy Spirit works through the instrumentality of truth. Where little truth is known, but small blessing can be afforded. The heathen sit in darkness, and can have but little joy. The Spirit does for the devout, consci-

entious heathen all He can, whispering approval and hope, like the *daimon* in the breast of Socrates. The old Hebrews had the oracles of God, and so the Spirit could be given unto them in larger measure. They knew the secret of Jehovah, and the "joy of His salvation." So the Psalmist prays, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." The prophets looked forward to the time when the Spirit should be poured upon us from on high. Those who knew most of divine truth lived experimentally in advance of their dispensation. But when Christ came with floods of living light, when through His life, death, resurrection, and ascension the plan of salvation had been revealed unto men, when life and immortality had been brought to light through the gospel, then the Holy Spirit had, so to speak, such a leverage of truth in the human soul as was scarcely before dreamed of. Then through this fulness of truth He could stir the depths of the soul, arouse and intensify every holy emotion, call into exercise every power of the mind for the interpretation of the truth, and thus "baptize with the Holy Ghost."

Never before could He take the things of Christ and show them unto men ; and so never before could He produce the fulness of love, joy, peace, and filial confidence. It is the truth as it is in Jesus that has made the gift of the Comforter possible. Is not this the reason why those who believe not the truths concerning Christ fail to receive the fulness of the Spirit ? Is not this why the Comforter must be sought in Jesus' name ? And is not the power of the Spirit most manifested in individual believers, and in the congregation, when their attention is drawn to the great truths concerning our Redeemer ?

The Holy Spirit is always present in the conscience to convince the world of sin. That conviction is deepened, intensified, when the sinner turns his thought to holy truth, and especially when he gazes at Calvary. Thus conviction is constant, yet more keenly felt at times of serious thought. In like manner the witnessing Spirit dwells constantly in believers, and manifests His presence always, at least in freedom from condemnation and fear. With in-

creasing knowledge of the truth, and prayerful meditation upon it, assurance becomes clearer, and the fruit of the Spirit more abundant. And when the greatest truths are firmly grasped in faith, then one must, in harmony with spiritual law, be "filled" or "baptized" with the Holy Spirit. On the occasion of every baptism of the Spirit mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, prayer was being offered in the name of Jesus, or truth concerning Him was being proclaimed. If this spiritual law be rightly stated, then, when one grasps the promise of purity of heart through the blood of Jesus, there would naturally be expected the witness of the Spirit thereto with special clearness; and this is the general testimony of saints in all ages. To make the baptism of the Spirit synonymous with perfect purity of heart, or to say that one baptized with the Spirit is thereby and always entirely sanctified, is a proposition we have long distrusted. The Spirit bears witness to truth, and a powerful manifestation of His presence and indwelling may accompany other truth as well. We are not necessitated to infer that

the three thousand who certainly received the baptism of the Spirit with the baptism of water on the day of Pentecost were entirely sanctified. Many are wonderfully baptized with the Spirit at their conversion, and many times thereafter the baptism is and should be renewed. It is an intensification of the abiding witness of the Spirit.

We are thus led to see how special manifestations of divine grace may always be obtained. We cannot, however, reduce to law all the operations of the Spirit in the individual consciousness. He divideth to every one severally as He will. He giveth not account of all His matters. Special conviction often seizes suddenly upon sinners in unexpected moments, as in the case of St. Paul. The witness of the Spirit flashes out in the consciousness of believers in moments of special need. The power of God falls upon an individual or a congregation, or sweeps through a community in a great revival, and we cannot always tell the law of its working. We have to say, This is a miracle of grace, or this is special answer to prayer. Further study of His works

and ways may find out the laws that govern extraordinary and miraculous manifestations of His power in the soul, but they have not yet been enunciated, so far as we can learn. We know Him only in part, but God be praised that we do *know* Him.

The Spirit testifies of present, not of future salvation. The convert is still in a state of probation. While the witness of the Spirit is clear, the soul has the full assurance of hope, and feels sure of eternal salvation ; but the witness may be lost, and then the hope vanishes, or becomes a human hope mixed with doubts and fears, instead of a divine conviction. The comforting presence of the Spirit in the soul gives a foretaste of Paradise ; but as the celestial and the terrestrial Paradise have both been lost by sin, so every Christian *may* lose his heavenly inheritance. Such a loss is possible and sometimes, it appears, actual. Some who have experienced a most wonderful conversion and intimate communion with God have fallen into sin and vice, but their number is small. The fallen are generally those who have been ser-

vants rather than sons, who have not realized the joys of salvation, nor received the Holy Spirit. The soul that has once passed from darkness into light will not easily return to darkness. Still, it is important to attend to the warning of the apostle, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." By constant obedience and trustful prayer the witness may be retained continually.

THE ABIDING COMFORTER.

PRIEST. — "*Pax Domini sit semper vobiscum.*"

RESPONSE. — "*Et cum spiritu tuo.*" — THE MASS.

SPIRIT divine, whom oft I've sadly grieved,
 Slighting Thy will,
 Be not my soul of pardoning love bereaved;
 Be patient still.
 Let me now hear Thy whisper kind and low;
 Thy gracious presence ever with me go.

Spirit of love, so little loved in turn,
 Do not depart.
 In purifying flame forever burn;
 Baptize my heart.
 Thy presence is communion sweet and blest;
 Thy voice brings glad content and peaceful rest.

Spirit of purity and power and grace,
 Cleanse, fill, control.
Be my unworthy heart Thy dwelling-place,
 Thy home my soul.
To humble faith Thy peace is always given;
Thy joy is bliss supreme; Thy love is Heaven.

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